

World Pangolin Day 2015
Roundtable on Pangolin Conservation Challenges in Nepal



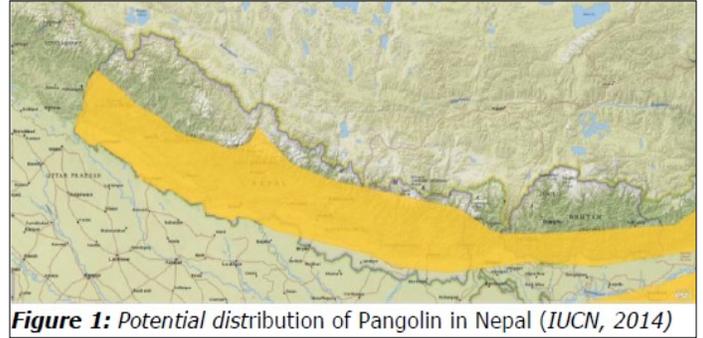
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Introduction:

Nepal is home for two types of Asian pangolins; Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*) and Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) (Baral and Shah, 2008) which are mostly in central and eastern region (Shrestha, 2003). Chinese Pangolins are nationally protected species (GoN,1973) so hunting is prohibited in Nepal but still, the poaching and illegal trade is increased eight fold in last five years (Paudel, 2015). Pangolins are the least studied burrowing mammals in the world including Nepal. In 2014, IUCN had made an effort to mapping out potential distribution range of Pangolin in Nepal that shows its distribution extending from alluvial flat Terai to the vertex up to the mid-hill (Fig. 1).



Recently, IUCN Pangolin Specialist Group assessed on the status of Pangolin (Challender, Waterman, & Baillie Jonathan 2014) and classified the Chinese Pangolin as Critically Endangered and Indian Pangolins as endangered ones; both enlisted as 'Protected' by the Government of Nepal under the shield of the National Parks & Wildlife Conservation Act (1973). Though protected; scientific status of Pangolin is yet least known in Nepal.

Pangolin habitats are mostly outside the Protected Areas (PAs) are severely degraded due to urban and semi-urban development; forest fragmentation & degradation; unregulated over grazing, etc. So they are being constantly threatened from anthropogenic behaviors. Poaching and trade is becoming main threat for not only the decline of Pangolin's population but the survival. If current trend of poaching/trade continue to happen there will be a remarkable decline of >90% of Pangolin population over the next 21 years or 3 generations from now (Challender & MacMillan 2014).

Nepal has made appreciable progresses in conserving large mammals and birds but still unknown about the pangolins. Hence, the first ever roundtable meeting organized to discuss "Pangolin Conservation Challenges in Nepal" on the occasion of World Pangolin Day 2015. The meeting brought together government, civil societies, academic institutions, researchers and students to discuss the challenges in pangolin conservation in Nepal. This report provides a summary of the discussions and the recommendations made by the roundtable.

Chinese Pangolin Conservation in Nangkholyang and Dokhu Villages of Taplejung district, Nepal

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Abstract

Chinese pangolins (*Manis pentadactyla*) also known as scaly ant eaters are least studied and poorly known critically endangered species listed in appendix II of CITES with zero annual export quota. Population is declining on an alarming rate as the illegal trade of pangolin is rather high than Tigers, Rhinos and Elephants. National Trust for Nature Conservation in support of Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered fellowship program of Zoological Society of London implemented Chinese pangolins conservation project in Nangkholyang and Dokhu villages of Taplejung district in eastern Himalayas of Nepal. Eastern Himalayas is one of the biodiversity hotspot. Information on status, distribution, ecology and drivers of population decline are collected walking through human and grazing trails, deploying camera traps and interviewing local communities. To control illegal trade and to raise public awareness we established pangolin conservation committees and sub-committees in the villages. A total of 192 males and 71 females are affiliated in pangolin conservation work through these conservation committees. School teaching program, community meetings, group discussions, district and national level workshops were conducted to raise public awareness on pangolin conservation. Pangolins were captured on camera trap and burrows were recorded widely throughout the study area. Illegal trade is found to be more serious than we thought before implementation of the project. Community based conservation can be efficient conservation approach if we being able to ensure direct and indirect benefit of pangolin conservation to the local communities. Pangolins are worth alive than dead for local and regional communities.

Key Words: Habitat, Distribution, Conservation Education, Awareness

An Overview on Illegal Trade of Pangolins in Araniko-trail

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Abstract

Poaching and trade is a growing challenge to Pangolin conservation. Being a host of Indian Pangolin and Chinese Pangolin, Nepal acts as both a source-country and as a transitional hub for pangolin parts and their derivate. Well-established channels through Nepal to Tibet deliver pangolins to China, the Middle East and South East Asian markets. However, there has been relatively little effort to systematically study patterns or trends in pangolin trade through Nepal. This paper explores the shifting patterns of the illegal pangolin trade based on six years (2009-2014) of wildlife seizure data compiled from national newspapers, Nepal's Police, District Forest Office, Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation, and from records of conservation organizations. These suggest a possible shift in trade from species widely-recognized as threatened by trade (e.g., Tiger, Asian Elephant, and One Horned Rhinoceros) to other species, with dramatic increases in seizures of Pangolin, Red panda, Common Leopard, and Eurasian Eagle owl. This trend, however, could also represent changing enforcement strategies, and greater awareness of trade in pangolin and other species which are mainly outside of the protected areas. Seizure records have limitations for researchers, but given the severe lack of information on illegal trade and challenges of collecting primary data, they are also a valuable, under-utilized dataset. There is a clear benefit to improving the collection of seizure records, including by expanding them so baseline data is collected when seizures are made, such as on suspected origin and destination of wildlife and on the participants involved in trade. Controlling the illegal pangolin harvest and trade, particularly outside the protected areas, is a mounting challenging. There is a need not only for systematic evaluation to improve enforcement, as well as to better explore non-enforcement to save world's critically endangered pangolins.

Key Words: Pangolin, Poaching, Trade, Enforcement

Pangolin Conservation Challenges in Nepal

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Abstract

Nepal homes two species of pangolins: Chinese Pangolin and Indian Pangolin. Both are globally threatened to extinction. Both are protected by inclusion in National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973. Pangolins are shy, harmless & are the only mammal with scales thus are evolutionary unique. Being not attractive as other flagship species such as Rhino, Tiger and Elephant, pangolins have been least prioritized & neglected nationally & globally. Notably, illegal trade in pangolins and their derivatives continues to be widespread in and around the world bringing them in the brink of extinction. In Nepal, people perceive pangolin products to hold magical powers and ability to cure numerous illnesses and are eaten with great delicacy. Besides, poaching remains a significant threat to pangolins and it is being accelerated by illegal trade, forest exploitation, forest fire and encroachments. Lack of ecological knowledge and its status in rural communities and non-functional government are causing its survival in peril. Therefore, the only potential mechanism is to engage the local communities in establishing community-based pangolin conservation programs through tangible benefits to them. There is a dire need of sufficient funding to run and boost up the community initiatives for the patrol-based monitoring at sites with high pangolin densities, massive conservation education and certainty of effective and sustainable alternatives options for the people who used to search and kill pangolins.

Key Words: Community, Conservation, Awareness

Recommendations:

The five-point recommendation made by the Roundtable are as follows:

1. Document distribution, status and threat of pangolins in Nepal;
2. Identify pangolins strongholds and set-up community based pangolin conservation pocket areas;
3. Increase widespread pangolin conservation awareness focusing grass-root communities;
4. Formulate national conservation action plan of pangolin
5. Ensure effective law enforcement and anti-poaching mechanisms

Participants:

The roundtable was actively attended by more than 65 pangolin conservation enthusiasts including Director General of DNPWC, Member secretary of NTNC, Directors of WWF Nepal, Professors, Researchers, university students and representatives from various organizations. The complete list of the participants are as follows:

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1	Ambika Pd. Khatiwada NTNC
2	Anish Shrestha Greenhood Nepal
3	Anita Dandekhya IoF, Pokhara
4	Asha Thapa BBC Media Action
5	Ashish Tripathi IoF, Pokhara
6	Bibasha Khadgi Student
7	Bijaya Raj Paudyal NFA
8	Binita Rimal Tri-chandra
9	BK Dalit TNW
10	Buddhi Biswokarma Radio Himalaya
11	Deepa Rayamaghi Greenhood Nepal
12	Deepak Sundas Greenhood Nepal
13	Elson Thapa Kadambari College
14	Ghana S. Gurung WWF Nepal
15	Govinda Gajurel NTNC
16	Gyan Neupane Nagarik Daily
17	Ichchha Thapa CDES, TU

18	Injina Panthi	Greenhood Nepal	37	Pradeep Basyal	Greenhood Nepal
19	Jeevan Rai	FON	38	Pratima Bhandari	Student
20	Jyoti Aryal	Tri-chandra	39	Prativa Kaspal	Himalayan Nature
21	Kalyan Dahal	CAS College	40	Prava Pandey	NRDEPC
22	Khatri Raj Khatiwada	CDES, TU	41	Prof.Karan B. Shrestha	
23	Kumar Paudel	Greenhood Nepal		Himalayan Nature	
24	Kumod Lekhak	CDES, TU	42	Purna Man Shrestha	Zoology, TU
25	Mohan K.C.	REDD Centre	43	Radha Shrestha	Tri-chandra
26	Monroon Pokhrel		44	Radha Wagle	MoFSC
27	Mukesh Rai	Greenhood Nepal	45	Rajan K.C.	Greenhood Nepal
28	Nabin Khadka	RIA	46	Ramesh Dulal	DoF
29	Nabin Nepali	CDES, TU	47	Rangita Thapa	CDES, TU
30	Namrata Bhandari	CDES, TU	48	Rejina Khanal	Tri-chandra
31	Naresh Kusi	FON	49	Reshu Bashyal	CDES, TU
32	Naresh Subedi	NTNC	50	Roman Raut	ICU
33	Neha Khanal	KU	51	Rukka Bhattra	Tri-chandra
34	Nimisha Karki	KU	52	Sabin Sharma	Rajdhani Daily
35	Padam Bdr. Budha	CDES, TU	53	Sanjay Chhetri	ICU
36	Pema Sherpa	IoF Pokhara	54	Sanjay Paudel	RIA
			55	Santosh Karki	CDES, TU
			56	Shant Raj Jnawali	WWF Nepal
			57	Shiva Shrestha	Greenhood Nepal
			58	Siddhanta Pandey	RIA
			59	Sujata Awal	Khwopa
			60	Suman Acharya	IoF, Pokhara
			61	Suman Rai	Student
			62	Susank Dahal	RIA
			63	Tikaram Adhikari	DNPWC
			64	Unnati Simkhada	Tri-chandra